

The Patient Safety Reporting System

is a *voluntary, confidential, non-punitive* program available to all VA employees for the reporting of events and concerns related to patient safety



What Is the PSRS?

The Patient Safety Reporting System (PSRS) is a *learning* program being jointly developed by two federal agencies, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The PSRS invites all VA medical facility staff to voluntarily report any events or concerns that involve patient safety.

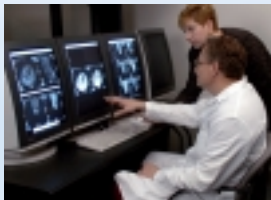
Why Is NASA Involved in a VA Program?

NASA has administered a similar and very successful program, the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS), for more than 25 years without ever violating a reporter's confidentiality. NASA is an independent, respected research organization that does not have a regulatory or enforcement interest. It can therefore serve as an objective, trustworthy custodian of reports submitted by VA personnel.

Is the PSRS Replacing Any of the VA's Other Reporting Systems?

No, the PSRS is completely different and is *complementary* to the VA's other reporting systems.

For example, the VA's internal (Root Cause Analysis) system identifies the basic or controlling causal factors associated with Adverse Events and Close Calls and provides detailed action plans to decrease the likelihood or reoccurrence. In contrast, the PSRS system is designed to identify broad system vulnerabilities and act as a "safety valve."



Are PSRS Reports Protected?

Yes, PSRS reports have strong legal and procedural protections. PSRS reports are considered confidential and privileged quality assurance documents under the provisions of 38 USC 5705. *The PSRS removes all personal names, facility names and locations, and other potentially identifying information before entering reports into its database.*

What Types of Events May Be Reported to the PSRS?

Use the PSRS to report these types of events:

- "Close calls" - Events or situations that could have resulted in accident, injury, or illness, but did not, either by chance or through timely intervention;
- Unexpected serious occurrences that involved a death, physical injury, or psychological injury of a patient or employee;
- Lessons learned or safety ideas.

In other words, any safety-related event may be reported to the PSRS.

Are There Any Types of Events That May Not Be Reported?

Several types of events are not protected by 38 USC 5705, Department of Veterans Affairs. These include the following intentional unsafe acts:

- Criminal acts;
- Purposefully unsafe acts;
- Acts related to alcohol/substance abuse;
- Impaired provider;
- Alleged/suspected abuse.

How Is the PSRS Form Used?

The PSRS form is printed on a legal-sized sheet of paper. It consists of three parts:

- A Reporter Return Receipt** - NASA will return this part of the form to you as proof that your report has been received. NASA does not retain any of the information you provide on the reporter receipt strip, but this information allows NASA to contact you for additional clarifications about your report, if these are needed.
- B General Information** - this section asks for background information about your position, experience, and general event characteristics.
- C Narrative** - a blank space for writing where you can describe what happened in your own words, and any safety lessons you may have learned from the experience. The back of the form provides additional space for the Narrative.

A

B

C

How Do You Report to the PSRS?

To report to the PSRS you will need to find a form, fill out the form, and mail it to NASA.

- 1 **Finding a PSRS Form.** PSRS forms are available from the following sources:

Paper Copies

- At convenient locations in your medical facility, such as nurses' stations, staff lounges, and other sites easily accessible to staff.
- From your facility's Patient Safety Manager.
- From NASA at the following address:
PSRS, P.O. Box 4, Moffett Field, CA 94035-0004.

Internet Copies

- Reporting forms may be downloaded from the PSRS Internet Home Page at the following address:
<http://psrs.arc.nasa.gov>

The reporting forms are in an Adobe Acrobat format. Follow instructions for downloading the form and a free copy of the Acrobat Reader from Adobe. Print the form, fill it out, and mail it.

- 2 **Filling Out the PSRS Form.** Please fill out all sections of the form as completely and accurately as possible with a blue or black ink pen. In the narrative section, tell the story of what happened in your own words.

- 3 **Mailing the PSRS Form.** Official paper copies of the PSRS form are *preaddressed* and *postage-free*. Just fold the form and mail it. The form will be sent to the NASA address above.

If you download a form from the PSRS web site, you will need to print out the form, place it in an envelope, and mail it to the NASA address above using your own stamp.



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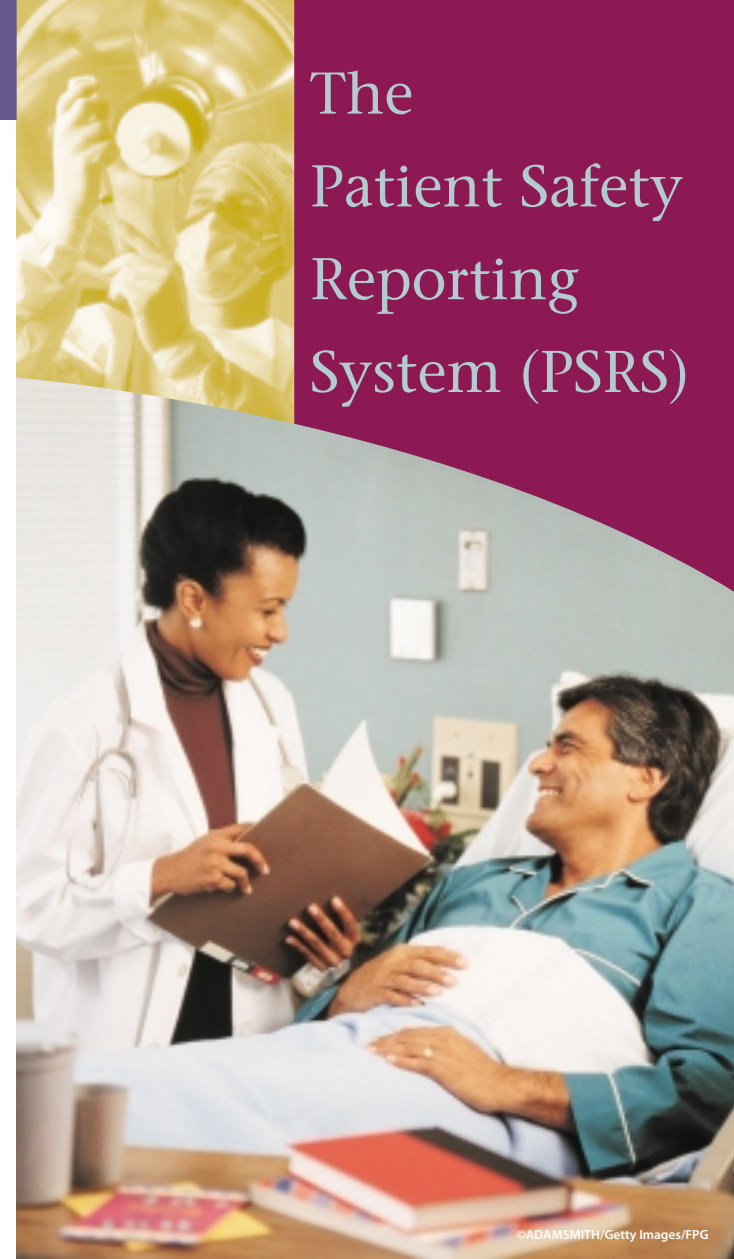
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A confidential program that collects, protects, and uses event data to improve patient safety in VA medical facilities